

WHOLE HEALTH NEWSLETTER

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
North Florida / South Georgia Veterans Health System

Winter 2021/2022 VOLUME 2, EDITION 2



Message from the Whole Health Program Manager, Laurie Reisman, LCSW

“You are the sky. Everything else is just the weather.”— Pema Chodron

Greetings!

I hope that this newsletter finds you in good health and living your life's purpose. This is the time of year when the nights are longer and the days are shorter. This generally provides time for inner reflection, introspection & growth. This is a liminal time. As we reflect on the darkness, think about all of the mysteries, magic & growth that come from it. We are born from the dark and we dream in the dark. The darkness brings us a fresh new perspective. It gifts us with hope. Because of this, it is the time of year when many of us tend to set up goals for ourselves. I want to encourage us to be in the space and mystery of dreaming and re birth. When I was giving birth to my child, it was very painful, and I remember thinking at one point, “there is no going back, this child has to come

out.” Something about that perspective, allowed for me to surrender and relax into the moment. Before I knew it, I was holding the most beautiful dream imaginable in my arms. Let this message inspire us to embrace the pain and difficult times, as it is a sure sign that something beautiful is about to be born from within us. I invite us to consider dropping the old patterns that no longer serve us so that we can get out of our own way. Let us allow what is meant to be; arise and to flourish. We are all a beautiful masterpiece of the creator. It's time to shine that truth to world. Whole Health is here with you to help you realize and remember who you are!

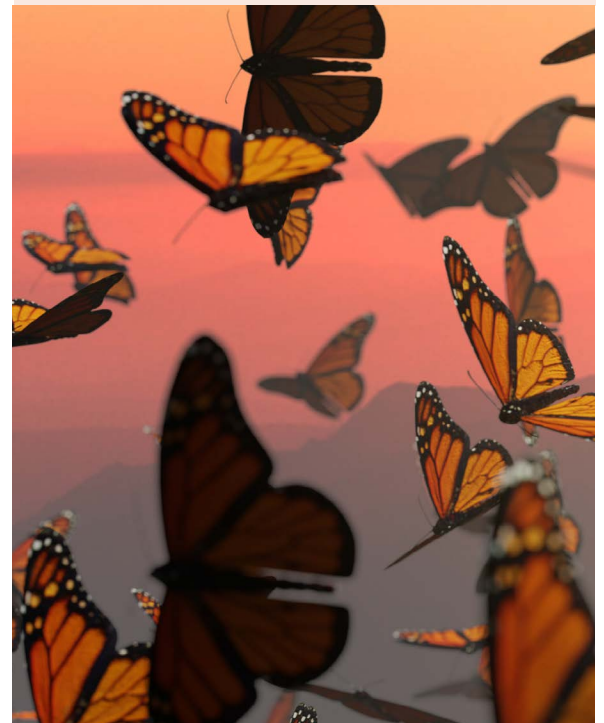
“Awaken, Arise to the wholeness of your being. Awaken Arise to the beauty of your soul.”

- Hanna Tifferet



“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but we rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.”

-Maya Angelou





Why are Food and Drink Important?

Making healthy choices about what you eat and drink is a powerful way to help care for yourself. Food and drink give our bodies the fuel used to work properly, stay healthy, and fight disease. Choosing foods that nourish rather than harm your body may help prevent chronic conditions and the need for certain medications in the future. Food can also be used to help treat some health conditions.

The resources offered here will help you work to manage your food and drink for better health and well-being.

Whole Health Handouts

[Carbohydrates and Your Health — Glycemic Index, Glycemic Load, and Blood Sugars](#)

[Deciding How to be a Healthier Eater](#)

[Healthy Tips on Eating Out and Grocery Shopping](#)

[Mindful Eating](#)

[How a Healthy Gut Makes for a Healthier You](#)

[Probiotics for Specific Conditions](#)

[How to Eat a Mediterranean Diet](#)

[Eating to Reduce Irritable Bowel Symptoms: The FODMaP Diet](#)

[Whole Health Food, Drink, Activity, and Symptom Log](#)

[Eating to Reduce Inflammation](#)

[When Your Food & Drink Could Be Causing You Problems: Elimination Diets](#)

Resources from this food and drink section taken from: [Food & Drink - Whole Health \(va.gov\)](#)

The Beginning

By Rachel Kann

If you can find stillness,
The jasmine will night-bloom in
your direction,
and the breeze
will carry its sacred exhalation of perfume toward you.

Breathe,
the moon will cascade waves of
radiance
downward, drop her silver robes,
glow.

You will awaken,
overtaken by a love from within
that arrives unbidden,
golden particles rising
beneath your skin.

All of existence
longs to be an offering.
Eternity is a constant whisper
wishing to be listened to.

This is the beginning.
This is only the beginning.

Let it in.



When practiced to its fullest, mindful eating
turns a simple meal into a spiritual
experience, giving us a deep appreciation of
all that went into the meal's creation as well
a deep understanding of the relationship
between the food on our table, our own
health, and our planet's health.

— *Nhat Hanh* —

AZ QUOTES

As We Gather at the Table

Robin E. O'Hearn, Ph.D.

When my mother passed away at the age of 71, there was a new empty space in my heart that the passage of time has not completely healed. When my 91-year-old father joined her two years ago, I experienced more than grief over losing him, but a sense of loss in a larger sense... an experience of feeling uprooted and a bit lost, as the two anchors of my family had been pulled up and I was set adrift. Although I am middle-aged, I felt again like a child and in need of comfort and nurturance and warmth. With Dad's death just over a month before Thanksgiving, my siblings and I were unsure how we should—or even if we should—celebrate the holidays. "It's just not the same," we all felt. The more I reflected and thought about the family (often multi-family) meals over the years, the more I began to believe that sharing our table together was more important than ever. In my quest to heal my grief and understand the connection between food and family, I read a lot. One of the articles that stuck with me quoted Miao You, a Buddhist priest, who said of the tradition of offering food at funerals, "Their spirit is still around so they can see the food offering. The [deceased] will say 'they put all of my favorite food in front of me. They really do care for me and now I can go away feeling happy and content for the life I've lived.'"

Many of the world's best chefs can recall their first calling to their vocation in terms of loving memories. A grandmother baking bread, the scent and heat of a barbecue smoker as a father slow-cooked brisket and chicken to feed the neighborhood, the exclamations of delight over a perfectly tender pot of rice and beans. Chef and founder of the World Central Kitchen charity, Jose Andres, remarked on his own journey, writing "I realized very early the power of food to evoke memory, to bring people together, to transport you to other places, and I wanted to be a part of that." Although I answered my own call to psychology and not professional cooking, many of my most treasured memories were made in my mother's kitchen, watching her make pie crusts and Yorkshire puddings and mouth-watering stews from scratch. To not come together and share

these sacred memories and food traditions began to seem unthinkable. The words of grief counselor and author Alan D. Wolfelt sum it up beautifully: "Food is symbolic of love when words are inadequate."

Honor the Space Between no Longer And Not Yet.

Nancy Levin

Aside from the social connection of breaking bread together, special foods and meals can help connect us to our own roots and to our common humanity. Food traditions represent the resilience of the spirit and the strength that we have to maintain our integrity and dignity and heritage. A 2012 cookbook, "Recipes Remembered: A Celebration of Survival," holds that food represents identity for people displaced (in this case, Jews forced from their homes during the Holocaust). Michael Twitty, an African-American chef and food historian, writes in his book "The Cooking Gene," "My entire cooking life has been about memory. It's my most indispensable ingredient." Food is necessary for our bodies, of course, but it can also provide us a different kind of sustenance – sustaining connections, traditions, and even our identity. As we head into winter, may you all find warmth and sustenance and connection through even the humblest of shared meals.

Holiday Fruit Crostini

Yield: 6 servings | Serving Size: 2

Crostini Ingredients

- 1 6-inch baguette or sub/hoagie roll
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup fresh fruit, such as apples, pears, figs, cranberries, or raspberries
- 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar, white wine vinegar, or lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon honey
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper, freshly ground
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup crumbled goat cheese, shaved parmesan, or sliced brie

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 °F.
2. Slice the baguette into diagonal, ½-inch thick slices.
3. Place baguette slices on a baking sheet and brush with olive oil.
4. Toast them in the preheated oven for 5 minutes, flipping once, about half way through.
5. Slice or dice the fruit and top each slice of toasted baguette with 1 tablespoon of fruit
6. Drizzle each crostini with balsamic vinegar or lemon juice and honey.
7. Top with 1 teaspoon of cheese and a pinch of salt and pepper each.

Recipe Notes:

Garnish with fresh thyme for a savory twist and splash of green

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 104 | Total Fat: 6 g | Saturated Fat: 2.7 g
Sodium: 196 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 9 g | Dietary Fiber: 1 g | Protein: 4 g

For more recipes, please visit www.nutrition.va.gov





Healthy Teaching Kitchen Program for Veterans

The NF/SG VA offers many different interactive, nutrition education classes under the Healthy Teaching Kitchen program that focus on teaching Veterans how to apply nutrition education to reach their health goals through cooking and food preparation. All classes are currently offered online through VVC and cover everything from food selection, shopping and meal planning, to home cooking, culinary techniques, food safety, flavor balancing, nutrient content and more. If interested please contact Melanya Souza, RD, LD/N our Healthy Teaching Kitchen Dietitian on Secure messaging or at 352-559-5961 or 352-548-6000 x 106630 to learn more and receive a current copy of the Healthy Teaching Kitchen class schedule.

Employee Wellness Healthy Teaching Kitchen “Bites” Series.

For more information contact the Healthy Teaching Kitchen Dietitian, [Melanya Souza](#), RD, LD/N

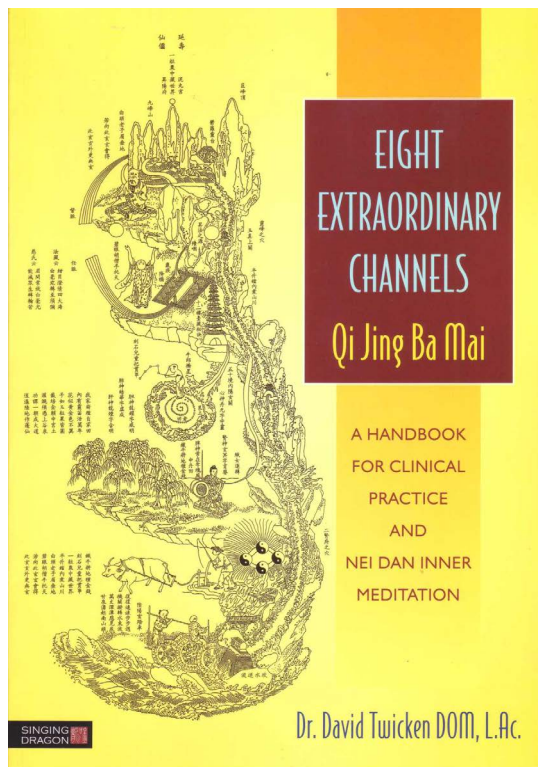


Extraordinary Acupuncture Treatment for Pain during an Extraordinary Holiday Season

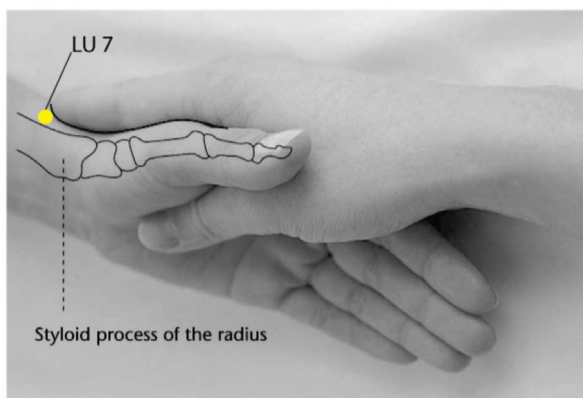
Heather Stiles, Chief Hospital Corpsman Retired Navy Veteran, Master of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, and Health System Specialist Credentialing and Privileging for Chief of Staff Service, North Florida South Georgia Veteran's Health System

Acupuncture is a full system of medicine that is utilized to treat pain and many other chronic health conditions. I've chosen to reference a few acupuncture points that are used to treat certain regions of the body in a channel pathway to treat pain as a part of an extraordinary meridian system called the ren mai. Traditionally, extraordinary meridians are chosen when regular channel treatment have not worked, or the condition seems to be deeper rooted within the body.

One might say this is a unique holiday season. The first holiday season post-pandemic with many risks still among us. The holiday season brings about extraordinary weather changes as well as extraordinary eating and resting habits outside of our regular routines. In times such as these, we may need to reach out to extraordinary acupuncture treatments; one of which is the Ren Mai Extraordinary Meridian.



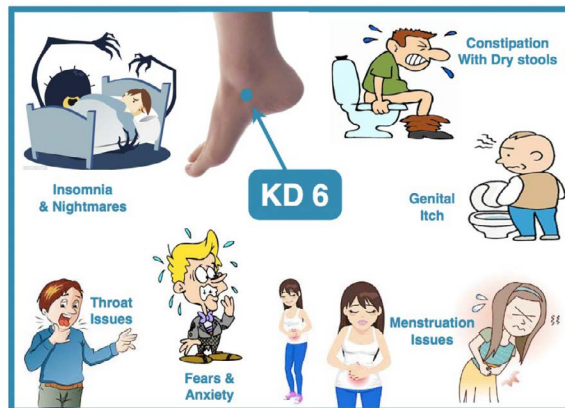
There's a great book on the subject at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center Library on the fourth floor near elevator B. Check out this excellent resource from the medical library with bar code 00018995.



(picture credit: [What does that point do? Lung 7 — Synergy Acupuncture & Wellness](#))

Lung 7 is well paired with and to combine with Kidney 6 midline ankle pain as well as for issues with the lungs, abdomen, neck, face, and throat. In this image, you can see kidney six is located just below the midline ankle bone (malleolus).

You can also see the things kidney six might be helpful with.



(picture credit <https://acuproacademy.com/all-about-the-tcm-kidneys/>)

As with all physical conditions, in Acupuncture, there is a mental emotional component included. The Ren calms the mind and relieves anxiety but is also in the vessel in charge of self-care and self-love. The Ren allows us to find balance, steadiness, security, and a sense of safety. Winter is the season of utmost yin.

The Ren Mai meridian points treat yin deficient conditions you might more frequently see in the winter. See pictographic below to better reflect on the right time to use Lung 7 and Kidney 6 acupressure points for mental emotional needs:

Many people find activity useful to encourage the body to move in a certain direction. Here you will find an example of a short medical qi-gong exercise to help work on your kidney energy. <https://youtu.be/NjoYjYzNfFE>. Your kidneys oversee regulating your kidney yin and mental overwork symptoms. Kidneys also work with the Heart to help you feel connected to what you love and reflect internally on your goals and aspirations for the future. Well nourished yin also leads to less headaches and better sleep quality.



(picture credit <https://acuproacademy.com/th-8-extraordinary-vessels-ren/>)

As with all acupuncture, acupressure can be tried at home with no risk. If you find acupressure provides you mild relief, you may want to consider reaching out to a licensed Acupuncture Physician through community care here at the VA as a Veteran patient or into the community as a staff member to help you reduce your pain and increase your physical capabilities throughout this holiday season. Please always consult your primary healthcare provider for any conditions you feel are outside the scope of acupuncture.

More information on the topics discussed above can be found at: <https://acuproacademy.com/> authored by Clara Cohen Acupuncture Physician, in your VA library in the book Eight Extraordinary Channels Authored by David Twicken Doctor of Oriental Medicine and Licensed Acupuncture Physician, as well as <http://synergyacupunctureandwellness.com/> authored by Tracy L. Revett, Licensed Acupuncture Physician.

Guided Imagery by Debby Lefler, LPN Whole Health Coach, The Villages OPPC

This quarter we are going to talk about guided imagery. Guided imagery is a Mind-Body practice that has been used throughout history to change behaviors, perspectives, and physiology. It is used to support healing. It is the language of the unconscious mind and is the dominant language through which the unconscious mind communicates information and inspire to the conscious mind and to the body as well. It is the conscious use of the imagination to create images that may affect the body and mind. It is a powerful, time-honored method for understanding yourself, healing your body and mind and maintaining your overall well-being.

Studies have shown that guided imagery can benefit the body and your health in many ways. It can help with respiration, heart rate, can decrease blood pressure, metabolic rate, digestive system motility and secretion, decrease cortisol (stress hormone) levels, cholesterol levels, immune system activity (such as cancer and HIV), PTSD, mood, including levels of anxiety and depression, help with handling radiation therapy, It helps you to balance the sympathetic nervous system, (the fight or flight response) with the relaxation of the parasympathetic nervous system. It can be done to bring about general stress reduction or to focus on a specific outcome.

Imagery brings about physiological changes because it activates the same parts of the brain that are active in a real situation where you are actually seeing or hearing or smelling. There are two basic kinds of imagery techniques: active and receptive. With active imagery, you intentionally use specific images to create changes or to imagine some desired result. Receptive, involves the use of a relaxed meditative state to access information from the unconscious. When images just come to you spontaneous, that is passive imagery. Guided imagery is something that can be taught one-on-one or in a group setting.

If guided imagery is something you are interested in, please contact your Whole Health coach. They can teach you guided imagery or enroll you in Mind and Body Skills group class.

Information obtained from, The Center For Mind and Body Medicine and the VA Whole Health library

Please Join Us



We are excited to offer a new series of classes for our expecting and breastfeeding mothers. The classes will be provided monthly and cover various topics related to this special time in your life.

When: First Wednesday of every month

Time: 12:00PM-1:00PM

Location: Virtual by VVC

Upcoming Classes

December 1, 2021- **Exercise/Stretching**

January 5, 2022- **Postpartum Depression**

To register: Please call Angela Rozar, RN, Maternity Care Coordinator at (850) 513-7264 or send a secure message.



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Maternity & Fertility Services: Did you know that the VA covers a full range of maternity care services? Maternity care is a provided service offered through local community obstetric care providers. Some covered services include prenatal care, education, obstetrical ultrasounds, prescription medications, lactation support, and support in the event of a miscarriage or stillbirth. To further support pregnant Veterans, a Maternity Care Coordinator is available throughout every stage of her pregnancy. The role of the Maternity Care Coordinator is to serve as a liaison while assisting the veteran in navigating health care services and connecting to community resources.

In addition to maternity care services, the VA also provides fertility treatments. These include infertility counseling, genetic counseling, vasectomy or tubal ligation reversals, and medications. Also, Veterans with certain service-connected conditions that result in infertility may be eligible for in vitro fertilization or other forms of assisted reproductive technology. For more information, please contact Angela Rozar, DNP, RN, at (850)513-7264.

Chaplain Services: VA Chaplains are available to you for spiritual and pastoral support. Our desire is to care for our Veterans, their families and our staff members alike. We are here to listen and encourage, offer comfort and hope, provide prayer and emotional support, and promote a sense of peace. In the Gainesville and Lake City VA Medical Centers, you have 24/7 access to our Chapels for prayer, meditation or to simply sit in a quiet place. Our offices are located nearby if you would like to talk. Please feel free to call us or drop-in at your convenience. We are also available to our OPC's and CBOC's by phone or virtually and at Jacksonville OPC in-person. We want you to know that we are here for you!

Gainesville VAMC

Main Building (1st Floor, B232-1) 7:30am - 4:00pm, daily (352) 548-7427

Lake City VAMC

Main Building (1st Floor, B110) 7:00am - 3:30pm, daily (386) 755-3016 ext. 392125

Jacksonville OPC

Jefferson St. Building (1st Floor, 1P105)

8:00am – 4:00pm, M-F

(904) 475-6381

Ginger



Winter Root:

Patricia Granberry, LPN Whole Health Coach Gainesville

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale* Roscoe), is a well-known herbaceous plant. Ginger is a natural spice that is used in diverse regions to add a pungent flavor to food. Furthermore, ginger has been used as an herbal medicine for common health problems. The clinical effects of ginger have been introduced as six subsections: nausea and vomiting, gastrointestinal function, pain, inflammation, metabolic syndromes, and other symptoms. Reportedly, ginger has been effective in a majority of studies, including those that examined the digestive function, improvement in the expression level of markers for colorectal cancer risk, and anti-inflammatory functions. Ginger is safe as a part of a balanced diet. If you're adding it to food, you're likely not eating large amounts. People have been eating ginger for over 3,000 years. The root started as an ancient medicine and a common ingredient in Asian cuisine, but now you can find it almost anywhere. Even ginger beer has become a thing!

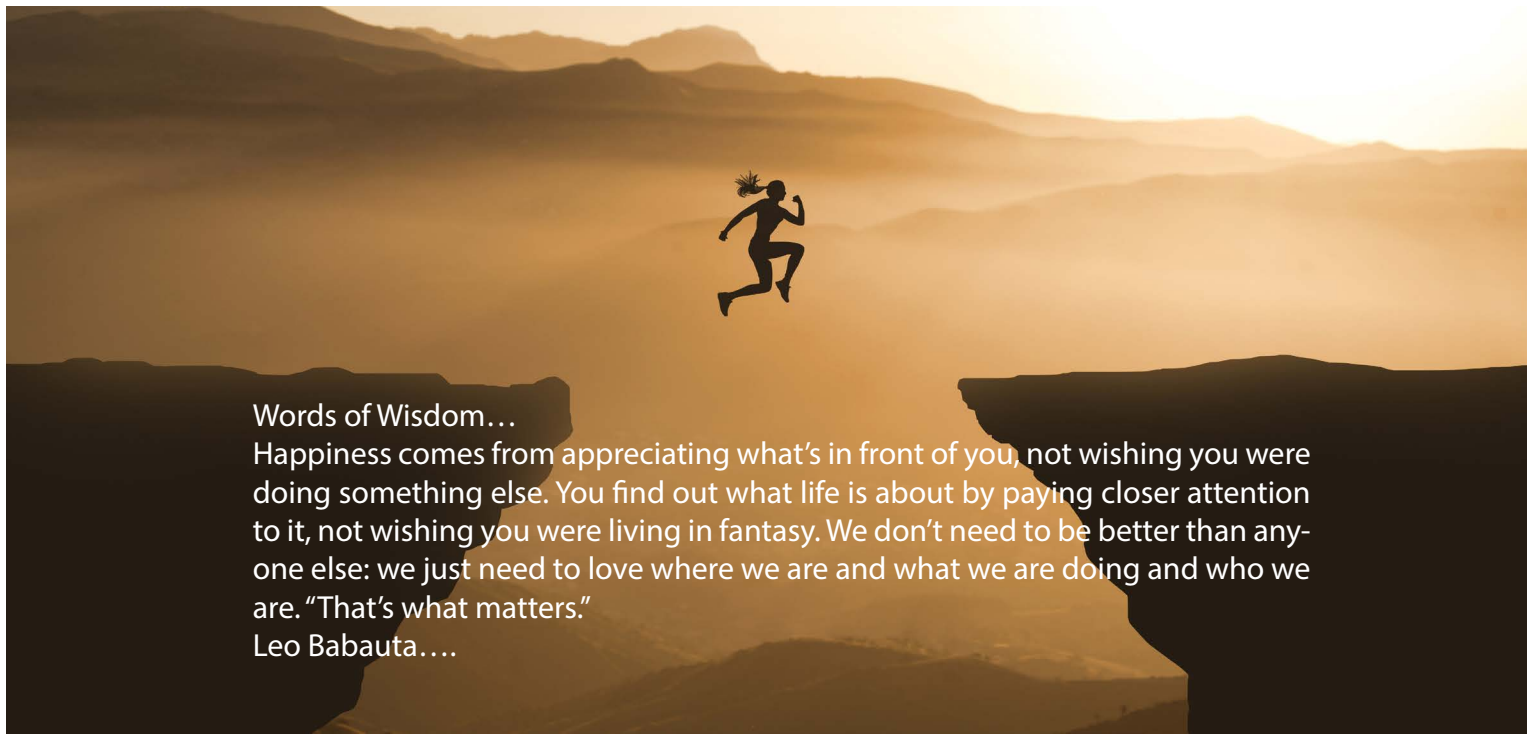
The information and reference guides in this website are intended solely for the general information of the reader. The contents are not intended to offer personal medical advice, diagnose health problems, or for treatment purposes. It is not a substitute for medical care provided by a licensed and qualified health professional. Please consult your health care provider for any advice on medications.

[Nutrition facts of the food you eat and its impact on health.](#)

Ginger on Human Health: A Comprehensive Systematic Review of 109 Randomized Controlled Trials Nutrients. 2020 Jan; 12(1): 157.

Published online 2020 Jan 6. doi: 10.3390/nu12010157

Remember that good nutrition is not about focusing on any one food or nutrient above all others. It is about balance: consuming a variety of foods and getting a balance of all kinds of different nutrients. For personalized nutrition counseling, reach out to your PACT dietitian.



Words of Wisdom...

Happiness comes from appreciating what's in front of you, not wishing you were doing something else. You find out what life is about by paying closer attention to it, not wishing you were living in fantasy. We don't need to be better than anyone else: we just need to love where we are and what we are doing and who we are. "That's what matters."

Leo Babauta....



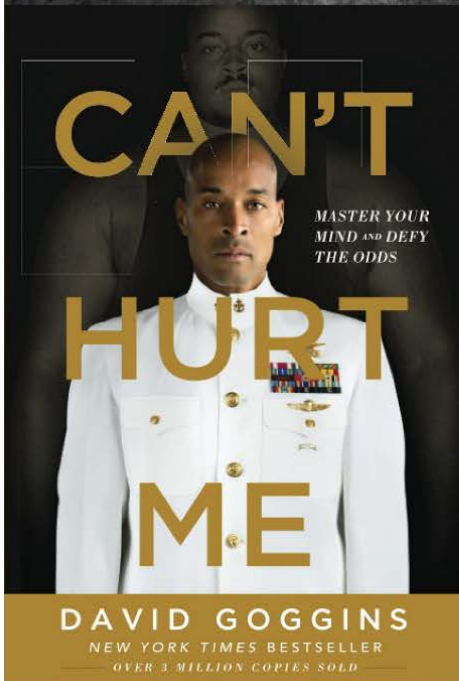
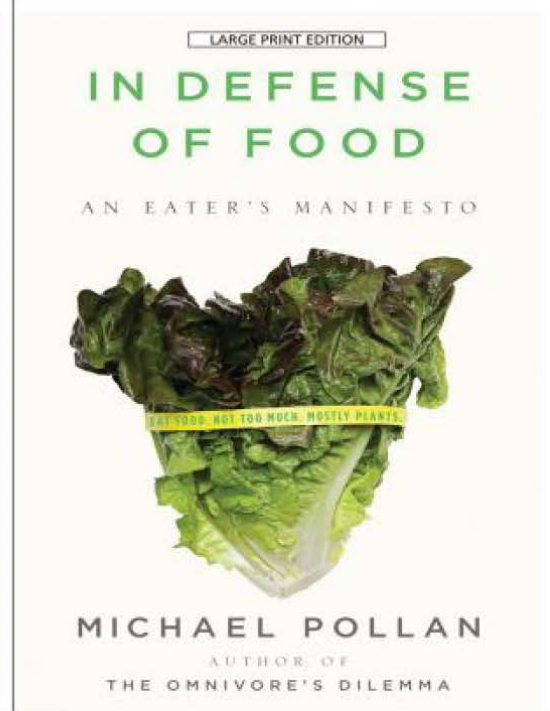
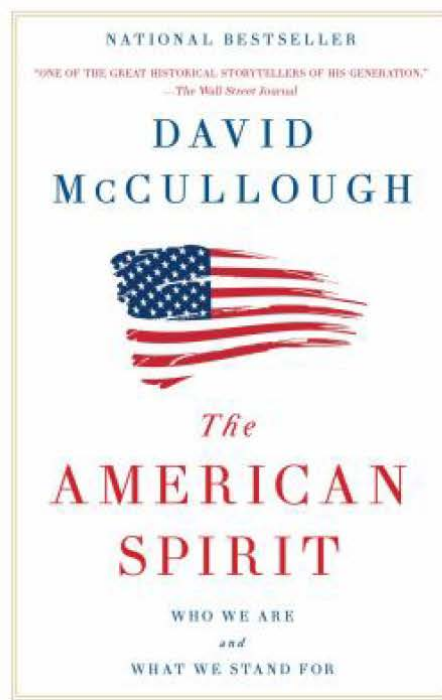
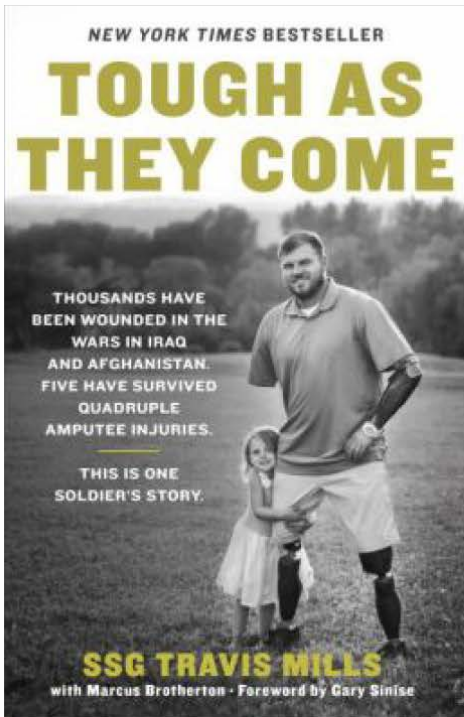
Peer Support Message:

I have had a love/hate relationship with food for as long as I can remember. However, all that changed about a decade ago. I was coming to the VA every other month to receive care due to chronic sinus and lung infections. It was mentioned to me that it could be related to allergies by my providers and my dietician suggested it may even be a food allergy. Then I was asked if I had any problems eating gluten and my response was, "What is gluten?" It was explained to me that gluten is wheat, barley and rye and I thought to myself, "That is pretty much everything I eat." I removed it from my diet for a few months and I felt amazing. Most importantly I did not get sick during that period. I reported back these findings and it was suggested to get tested to see if I am allergic or if I had celiac disease, however, to be tested, I would have to eat gluten again. I felt so wonderful that it did not matter to me either way. I was never going back to eating gluten. I have remained gluten free and eventually I also went off of sugar. As a result, I have more energy, less pain, my inflammation has significantly decreased, and I seem to be more emotionally balanced. I also lost weight during this process. I later found out during my mind body training that processed foods to include wheat and sugar can prolong symptoms of trauma and by going off these foods people are better able to cope and process trauma. No one diet is right for everyone, and talking with your PACT team can help you discover what is right for you. As for me, eating a healthy diet of protein, fruits and vegetables and limiting processed foods has made a world of difference in my ability to cope with anxiety and everyday stressors and has helped me to move my body. I am grateful that we have so many resources at the VA that can help with this area of health to include peer led groups, whole health coaches, the move program, dieticians and now yoga and tai chi. I encourage everyone to find what works for you and of course call your peers in PACT if you need support along the way.

Wendy Skinner
Peer Support, at the
Gainesville Primary Care clinic.

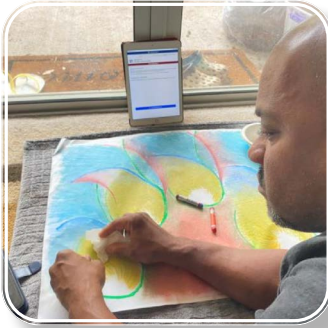
Book clubs for Veterans

Upcoming book clubs are being offered on these titles:



The NF/SGVHS Library, in partnership with Whole Health offers virtual book clubs for enrolled NF/SGVHS Veterans. Book clubs based on various topics offer participants an opportunity to engage with fellow Veterans for improved health and well-being! Book club discussions occur through VA Video Connect, the VA's secure modality for telecommunications with Veterans. The NF/SGVHS library staff sends out books for the Veterans to keep.

For a list of book club facilitators and additional information, please check out <https://nfsgvhs.libguides.com/home/veteranbookclubs>



VETERAN SUCCESS STORY

CHESS CHAHN

How does Coloring to Relax and Create help to relax and reduce stress?

This group takes you to a positive place that reaches out to you to make something that comes from inside of you. It focuses on you creating. It also in an indirect way helps to reawaken and/or strengthen a positive mindset. For a lot of us, its hard just getting going, or being around people, or seeing the good in things. Relax and Create are empowering words that release you to do something good.

As a Veteran, what impacts how you see the world and your own creative process?

My multiple experiences - good and bad while in the military. The traumas, the prejudice treatment, the deployment experiences. Then also how the general populations interact with me (us) – good and bad. While there are people who have respect for us and the sacrifice of your life and family, there are those who are very crass and rude and even disrespectful. This causes pain that draws you inside. This group has helped channel some of that feeling, acknowledge that other people and their issues/prejudices are their problem, and to stay focused on a higher road. That's what being creative does - helps you see and then stay focused on that higher road

Does your Veteran life experience correlate to your art?

I like to let the theme of the day have an impact on my creative art. And have to say that I try and let the art flow from wherever it comes from as we start with our group. Now, because it is a Veteran oriented group, I do think about my military experiences, yet I try to push the negative ones away and reorient on our theme or find that wonderful space using our techniques from whole health, and then move forward from there with pouring out onto our canvas or paper.



Color to Relax & Create supports your artistic point of view how?

Color to Relax & Create supports my artistic point of view by moving me (along with my class) to be creative, which is being positive. Art comes from random things inside or outside of us. I like to focus on building myself up by being positive and creating art that does that.

You facilitated a virtual Artistic Movement within the group, what are your thoughts of that experience?

I really enjoyed the experience and would really like to do more of that, even as a standalone. That was a part of my growth to step out and reconnect with something that was artistically oriented that I love to do. I think it is something that other Veterans enjoy as well. I also view it as a way of giving back to my Veteran Family and I saw that other people enjoyed it too, and that was personally gratifying on a deeper level. A lot of us have been through some painful things (mentally, emotionally, physically). Artistic movement is an encouraging and interactive activity that engages a positive energy inside of us. And I believe in feeding that positive energy so it can build momentum to offset some of the negativity that was forced on us.

How would you like for other Veterans to view art groups?

I would like Veterans to view art groups as a creative experience. I would like Veterans to try art groups as a way of tapping into something new in their life or even re-engaging in something that might have brought joy when we were younger

As a participant, what has helped you to evolve most within the group?

Some of the things that have helped me to evolve within our group have been the lead (Rochelle Shipman) and how she facilitates our expression, not so much guide or tell us what to do but facilitate the manifestation of whatever is inside of us. I think that is key towards growing or reconnecting to a positive thing inside of you. It has to come from you. Then another thing is the people in the group. It is awesome taking the time to grow with people. I think "you can teach an old dog new tricks" and the awesome people in my group have shown me how to do that, they have opened up to share themselves, their thoughts, their spirit...and that is what art can do, tap into your spirit and when nurtured from a positive place, it can be an amazingly enlightening thing over time.

When you were informed of the VA Creative Arts Festival, what were your thoughts?

I was initially hesitant, as my art comes from a private place - it feels good on a personal level and has touched my spirit to create something positive out of my negative military experiences. Even though it is shared with our group and we share our things with one another, it was okay to do that with our group. However, entering something into a larger contest, almost took me to a place of being devalued or devaluing it – and that was just me. Yet I had some great encouragement to the contrary from some great people so I decided that I would open

up. I think what gave me inspiration is that maybe if another veteran can see something in it, maybe it can stimulate a similar movement of art or just something in a positive direction. That was how I got connected, I saw someone else and what they created and thought maybe I have that inside of me.

As a result of COVID precautions in place, groups became virtual, how has that affected your ability to connect with others in Color to Relax & Create?

Virtual at least provides a way to connect and share. I have to admit that I do some level of group anxiety, and then to start something new like this added to feeling uneasy. Yet the virtual group was a great way of still moving this awesome idea forward. And there have been so many of us that have benefited from the art, from getting connected, from talking and explaining our creative pieces. We have also been able to do things in a different way as we have been at home where we are comfortable and can relax, which I think has added to the effectiveness of the group as well, despite the distance or lack of “face to face” connection. I do hope it moves back to a face-to-face group though. There is something to be said for personal interaction.

Is there anything you would like to share with other Veterans regarding art?

As Veterans we have had a multitude of experiences (some worse than others) that has caused damage and for us to wall up inside. Creative art expression is a wonderful way to open up and tap into a part of you that has been suppressed, oppressed, or otherwise discouraged. Try ART as a way of rediscovering who you are or seeing what else is inside of you. What has happened to you/us doesn't have to define us, let ART be one way of discovery for the new you. We all got something special inside us, let it out with creative art.



Interview by Rochelle Shipman, LPN Whole Health Coach

How to Navigate the Holiday Season Focusing on Healthy Lifestyle Choices

by Shannon Bloodworth MA, RDN, LD/N

NF/SG MOVE! Weight Management Coordinator and TeleMOVE! Care Coordinator

For many, the holiday season is full of events where food takes center stage. When I think about Thanksgiving, I think about my Aunt Trish's pecan pie, my mom's moist golden turkey stuffed with the best savory stuffing on the planet, my father's perfectly baked sweet juicy ham, and my sister's sweet potato souffle that I can only describe as a helping of happiness. The foods, dishes, and desserts available during the holidays are often labeled as "bad" by the toxic diet culture. I often hear people share shame or regret for what and how they ate around the holidays. This leads to New Year's resolutions promising weight loss, diet talk, restricting foods and weight cycling. Food cannot be morally "good" or "bad" and you are not "good" or "bad" for eating them.

If you are tired of feeling like you're stuck in a vicious dieting cycle, here are some ways to incorporate healthy lifestyle choices into your holidays while still enjoying your traditions:

- When making your plate: choose foods that are not available year-round and evoke memories that nourish your body, mind and soul
- Take your time eating, slow down to enjoy every bite, talk with family and friends and when you feel full, stop eating – it takes, on average, 20 minutes for your brain to receive the signal from your gut that you are full
- Eat when you are hungry and don't wait to eat – this can lead to overeating and feelings of regret
- Eat what you choose on the day of the holiday; it is just one day after all
- Pick a physical activity you enjoy and invite your family/friends to join you; get everyone involved in silly relay races, find a local turkey trot, go for a walk, or play hide and seek

Enjoy the pleasures and the traditions of the holidays while possibly adding some new traditions that include movement. Focus on healthy lifestyle choices because the number on the scale only tells you your relationship to gravity at a moment in time and nothing about your overall health. Have a happy and healthy holiday season.





January is **CERVICAL** **CANCER** **AWARENESS MONTH**

***January is Cervical Cancer
Awareness Month***

Come Join Us

January 4, 2022

10am – 1pm

Cervical Cancer Awareness Walk

Meet at the Pavilion

(Outside in front of Bed Tower

***Gainesville VMAC 1601 SW Archer Road Gainesville, FL
32608)***

January 18, 2022

10am – 1pm

***Cervical Cancer Information Event
Bed Tower Lobby***

Show your support for Cervical Cancer Awareness - every

Thursday wear **TEAL**

Mobile App: Stay Quit Coach



Stay Quit Coach is designed to help with quitting smoking. It is intended to serve as a source of readily available support and information for adults who are already in treatment to quit smoking - to help them stay quit even after treatment ends. The app guides users in creating a tailored plan that takes into account their personal reasons for quitting. It provides information about smoking and quitting, interactive tools to help users cope with urges to smoke, and motivational messages and support contacts to help users stay smoke-free. Stay Quit Coach is designed to be used in conjunction

with a clinical provider but may also be helpful as a self-management tool.

Features include:

- Interactive tools for increasing motivation to quit
- Tools for managing urges and difficult situations
- Extensive, scientifically-sound information about successfully quitting smoking
- Help planning and setting a quit date
- Tracking quit success, progress in reducing smoking
- Strategies for managing lapses
- Resources for getting help when needed



The app is available for free downloads at the Apple (iOS) app store or the Google Play store.

Need help with this mobile app? Send email to MobileMentalHealth@va.gov.



National Whole Health Resources:

The Whole Health approach to care empowers, equips, and treats Veterans so they can take charge of their health and well-being and live their lives to the fullest. Whole Health starts with a simple question: What matters to you?

Download the [Live Whole Health app](#) to manage your Whole Health journey anytime, anyplace. The [Whole Health](#) website is a great place to start your Whole Health journey.

Check out the [#LiveWholeHealth blog series](#)

The Pathway to Whole Health: <https://youtu.be/0nkO-3PA29c>

Adopting Whole Health: <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/docs/VA-OPCC-AdoptingWholeHealth-PhotoEssay-508.pdf> *Copy and paste into web browser



North Florida/South Georgia Whole Health Website: <https://www.va.gov/north-florida-health-care/programs/whole-health/> or check out our QR Code to just scan on your phone!

Resources for Homeless Veterans

- Information on [homelessness programs](#) and initiatives through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- [The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans](#). Has a helpline available to support Veterans needing homelessness resources and support. Contact at 1-800-VET-HELP or 1-800-838-4357.
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Veterans Aid Line. Contact at 1-877-4AI-DVET or 1-877-424-3838.



Contributors to the Veteran's Newsletter:

Shannon Bloodworth, MA, RDN, LD/N NF/SG MOVE! Weight Management Coordinator and TeleMOVE! Care Coordinator

Lisa Gallon, RN Breast Cancer Coordinator, NF/SG Veterans Health System

Patricia Granberry, LPN Whole Health Coach Gainesville, Ginger Root & Words of Wisdom from Leo Babauta

Lisa Huang, Library Supervisor, NF/SG Veterans Health System, Book Club and Stay Quit App

Debby D. Lefler, LPN Whole Health Coach The Villages CIH Modality; Guided Imagery

Chaplain Melvin, Chief of Chaplain Service NF/SG Veterans Health System Chaplain Message

Robin O'Hearn, PHD, Healthy Living Team, Jacksonville; As we Gather

Laurie Reisman, LCSW Whole Health Program Manager, NF/SG Veterans Health System: Program Manager Message, Rachel Kann poem, Pema Chodron, Maya Angelou & Tich Nat Han quotes.

Angela Rozar, DNP, RN, Maternity Care Coordinator, NF/SG Veterans Health System

Rochelle Shipman, LPN, Whole Health Coach Jacksonville : Veteran Success Story art and interview

Wendy Skinner, Certified Peer Support Specialist, PCMH Gainesville; Peer Support Message

Heather Stiles, Chief Hospital Corpsman Retired Navy Veteran, Master of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, and Health System Specialist Credentialing and Privileging for Chief of Staff Service, NF/SG Veteran's Health System, Acupuncture Article

Melanya Souza, Registered Dietitian, NF/SG VA Healthy Teaching Kitchen Dietitian and VA National Healthy Teaching Kitchen Co-Lead, Gainesville VA Medical Center: Recipe, Ginger section nutrition statement.

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